

Amusements Co-Night.

ACADEMY OF MUSIC.—Concert.
 BERNARDINI.—Concert.
 THE ASSINO.—Concert.

Index to Advertisements.

ADVERTISEMENTS.—11th Page.—5th and 6th columns.
 ANNOUNCEMENTS.—12th Page.—1st column.
 BAKING POWDER AND LAMPS.—10th Page.—5th column.
 BOARD AND ROOMS.—10th Page.—5th column.
 BUSINESS CHANCES.—10th Page.—5th column.
 BUSINESS NOTICES.—6th Page.—2d column.
 CLOTHING.—11th Page.—5th column.
 DANCING ACADEMIES.—11th Page.—2d column.
 DIVIDENDS.—10th Page.—5th column.
 DRUGS.—11th Page.—5th column.
 DRY GOODS.—11th Page.—5th and 6th columns.
 EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN.—11th Page.—2d column.
 FINANCIAL.—10th Page.—5th column.
 FINE ARTS.—11th Page.—5th column.
 FISH.—11th Page.—5th column.
 FLOUR.—11th Page.—5th column.
 FURNITURE.—11th Page.—5th column.
 GARDENS.—11th Page.—5th column.
 GENERAL.—11th Page.—5th column.
 HEALTH.—11th Page.—5th column.
 HOTELS.—11th Page.—5th column.
 INSURANCE.—11th Page.—5th column.
 LITERATURE.—11th Page.—5th column.
 MEDICAL.—11th Page.—5th column.
 MISCELLANEOUS.—11th Page.—5th column.
 MUSIC.—11th Page.—5th column.
 NEW.—11th Page.—5th column.
 OCEAN STEAMERS.—11th Page.—5th column.
 PROPERTIES.—11th Page.—5th column.
 REAL ESTATE.—11th Page.—5th column.
 RELIGIOUS.—11th Page.—5th column.
 RENTALS.—11th Page.—5th column.
 SPECIALS.—11th Page.—5th column.
 STEAMSHIPS.—11th Page.—5th column.
 TEACHERS.—11th Page.—5th column.

Business Notices.

"ALDERNEY BRAND" CONDENSED MILK.
 Fine brass fire sets, copper, brass and fine coal-burners and
 sales, selling of extra at 100 percent discount on all orders
 over \$100.00. Ten percent extra discount on all orders
 over \$500.00.
 Never since the American House, Boston, was opened has
 it enjoyed a better business than at present.

TERMS OF THE TRIBUNE.

Postage free in the United States.
 DAILY TRIBUNE, 1 year, \$12.00
 DAILY TRIBUNE, 6 months, \$7.00
 WEEKLY TRIBUNE, 1 year, \$3.00
 WEEKLY TRIBUNE, 6 months, \$2.00
 SENT BY MAIL.—All orders must be accompanied by
 remittance in full. No orders will be filled unless
 accompanied by cash or a check on a New York bank.
 Address: THE TRIBUNE, New York.

BRANCH OFFICES OF THE TRIBUNE.
 WASHINGTON—No. 1,322 F St.
 LONDON—No. 20, Bedford-st., Strand.
 PARIS—No. 9, Rue de la Harpe.

New-York Daily Tribune.

FOUNDED BY HORACE GREELEY.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1881.

TWELVE PAGES.

THE NEWS THIS MORNING.

FOREIGN.—The London cable dispatch to THE
 TRIBUNE announces an outbreak of hostile
 criticism on Mr. Blaine's dispatch. Oscar
 Wilde is about to visit this country. Mrs.
 Langtry has accepted an engagement at the
 Theatre Royal, Haymarket. The German
 Reichstag has refused to vote money for a military
 school in Alsace. A premium of sixty guineas
 has been paid on the overdue steamer City of
 London. It is understood that Queen
 Victoria will open Parliament in person. The
 Theatre Francaise may have to be closed for a
 month to make some alterations needed as a pre-
 caution against fire. Part of the Oran railroad
 in Algeria is flooded. A reward is offered
 for the conviction of the thieves who stole the regis-
 tered letters from the Hattin Garden. Post Office,
 London. The French steamer plough works, near
 Leeds, have been damaged by fire to the extent of
 \$800,000. Eight persons have been arrested
 in Ireland under the Coercion Act.
 DOMESTIC.—Thomas C. Acton is to be appointed
 to succeed Mr. Hillhouse as Assistant Treasurer of
 the United States at New-York. The defaulting
 teller of the Poughkeepsie bank has been de-
 clared insane. Further disclosures were made
 yesterday in regard to the failure of the Newark
 bank. Several Roman Catholic priests were
 ordained at Troy and at Baltimore. Colonel
 Corbitt thinks that the testimony in the Guiteau
 trial may all be in by Christmas. The Hon.
 Lewis H. Morgan died at Rochester.
 CITY AND SUBURBAN.—A fire in Broadway and
 Crosby-st. destroyed property estimated at a
 quarter of a million, yesterday. Dr. Isaac I.
 Hayes died of heart disease. The Military
 Institute met on Governor's Island. A new
 proceeding in the case of D. D. Chamberlain was
 begun. Three theatres were inspected by
 officers of the Fire Department. An organi-
 zation, the object of which is to over-
 throw John Kelly, was formally organized.
 Special precautions against smallpox were taken in
 Jersey City. Gold value of the legal-tender
 silver dollar (412 1/2 grains), 87.12 cents.
 Stocks were active, lower and unsettled, and after
 a fairly closed week, generally at about the level
 of 64 1/2.

THE WEATHER.—TRIBUNE local observations indi-
 cate warmer and clear or fair weather. Thermometer
 yesterday: Highest, 42°; lowest, 26°; average,
 34 1/2°.

The annals of 1881 are likely to be singu-
 larly incomplete. They will record the crime,
 but not the conviction, of President Garfield's
 assassin. The melancholy prediction is made
 in our Washington dispatches that the Guiteau
 case will run considerably into January. In
 one respect the public is now highly favored.
 The proceedings are suspended on Saturdays,
 so that Sunday's paper is always wholesome.

The vagaries of an invalid are not always to
 be encouraged. A Long Island woman, being
 convinced that her end was near and being
 unduly solicitous about the fate of her six
 children, implored her husband to marry her
 younger sister. He promised to do so after
 the funeral, and the sister was equally accom-
 modating, but the sick woman was afraid that
 they might not be as good as their word.
 She entreated them to give a dying woman
 the consolation of knowing that her children
 would certainly be cherished after her depart-
 ure. Worn out with her importunity, they
 finally consented to be married at once. When
 everything was settled to her satisfaction she
 derived so much contentment from contem-
 plating the future of her little ones that she
 rapidly convalesced.

America is still regarded as a promising lec-
 ture-field for English celebrities. No sooner
 does any struggling genius get his head above
 water abroad than he is greeted for a "re-
 munerative course of lectures in the States." Mr.
 O'Donovan, who recently made a great hit
 in London journalism by a series of graphic
 letters from Merv, where he had been impris-
 oned for many months, is now named as a
 probable candidate for Parliament, provided he
 abandons the American lecture-field. Mr. Oscar
 Wilde, the oracle poet of the Two-Two dispen-
 sation of aesthetic culture, may also accept in-
 vitations to lecture when he arrives in this
 country to produce his play. Twenty or even
 ten years ago the lyceum system was a most
 profitable source of income to clergymen and
 writers of national reputation, for every town
 of any size had its winter course of lectures.
 These courses have been gradually abandoned
 as the attractions of concert and theatre have
 increased, and lectures have ceased to be popu-
 lar entertainments unless a foreign lion can
 be exhibited.

The immunity which Guiteau has enjoyed
 in court is regarded with amazement and in-
 dignation by the New-York bench. One of
 the indices is credited with the grim pleas-

antry: "I would have directed a verdict of
 'murder in the first degree on the second day,
 and sentenced him to be hanged on the
 'third.'" The apologists for the Washington
 judge who has done so much to cast discredit
 upon American criminal practice plead his
 anxiety to afford the defence no ground for a
 second trial in extenuation of the license which
 he has allowed the prisoner. The Court
 should have insisted upon Guiteau's behaving
 himself from the first, and it would have had
 no difficulty in repressing his outbreaks. In
 fact, there never was an easier criminal to
 control than this poor-spirited creature, sim-
 ply because he is a most abject coward. His
 conduct in the van, when he was shot at, dis-
 closed what a craven he is. Judge Davis
 would have thundered out "Silence!" on the
 first day, and corked up all the malice, vul-
 garity, smudge and drivel with which he is now
 full to the brim and running over.

The publication of Mr. Blaine's dispatch to
 Mr. Lowell respecting the Clayton-Bulwer
 Treaty has been the event of the week in
 England. Our special cable dispatches contain
 a careful summary of the comments of the
 leading journals, and a discriminating view of
 the sudden outbreak of public feeling on this
 question. Both the form and the matter of
 the letter seem to have challenged criticism.
 In laying stress on the fact that England has
 not built forts at the mouth of the Suez Canal
 nor claimed exclusive control of that highway
 to India, the London critics neglect to state
 that Lord Salisbury has been generally con-
 demned for admitting France into a partnership
 in Egypt, and that some of the most influ-
 ential journals have at various times advocat-
 ed the annexation of that country. The
 former Editor of *The Daily News*, Mr. Edward
 Dicey, has recommended this course repeatedly
 in *The Nineteenth Century* and in other re-
 views, and that great organ of Liberal opinion,
The Spectator, has cordially favored it. Of
 course, if Egypt were annexed, England would
 exercise exclusive control of the Suez Canal.

Two of the subordinate appointments just de-
 cided by the President will attract attention.
 That of Judge Bancroft Davis for the place
 he formerly held as Assistant Secretary of
 State could not possibly be improved. Judge
 Davis, of course, belongs to the wing of the
 party which was defeated in the nomination of
 Garfield, but he is an admirably trained offi-
 cer, has discharged the duties of this place
 before to the perfect satisfaction of his supe-
 riors and the country, and has since been Min-
 ister to Germany. Mr. Blaine urged him to
 take the place when Colonel Hay insisted on
 retiring, and it is an excellent omen for the
 State Department that he has at last been
 persuaded back into it. Mr. Thomas C.
 Acton, who is to be Sub-Treasurer, is an old
 official, an original Conkling man of the most
 pronounced type, with an entirely clean and
 upright official and personal record. When
 General Garfield was shot he was reported as
 saying: "This is an hour when political in-
 trigues and ambition for office should cease."
 General Arthur will go in. The Cabinet
 "will undoubtedly be changed, and Conkling
 may be placed at the head of the State De-
 partment, and General Grant be made Secre-
 tary of War. Blaine will have to go out;
 that is certain. His race at the White
 House is run." Mr. Acton may have said
 more than he meant about "ambition for office
 ceasing," but he seems to have been entirely
 right, at any rate, as to the main chance.
 Still he probably wishes now that he hadn't
 talked quite so plainly about it the day after
 the President's assassination. Nevertheless, he
 will make a very fair Sub-Treasurer.

PROHIBITION IN KANSAS.

Kansas is the banner State, this year, in the
 Prohibition movement. Her latest step is a
 proclamation by Governor St. John saying that
 in Atchison, Leavenworth, Topeka, Wyandotte
 and Dodge City the new Prohibition law
 is persistently violated, and offering a re-
 ward of \$100 for arrest and conviction of the
 guilty sellers, and which will probably prove
 more efficient—rewards of \$300 for securing
 the conviction and removal from office of any
 city marshal or county attorney or sheriff, and
 \$100 for conviction and removal of any police-
 man or deputy sheriff, for failure to perform
 his official duty in enforcing the law; also \$500
 for breaking up any distillery or brewery.
 This mode of holding prosecuting officers to
 their duty is novel, but if it works as well as
 it looks there will be a demand for putting it in
 practice in other States than Kansas.

It is barely more than a year since the people
 of Kansas adopted an amendment to the State
 Constitution directing that manufacture and
 sale of intoxicating liquors shall be forever
 prohibited, except for medical, scientific and
 mechanical purposes. The majority of the popu-
 lar vote was 7,998 votes, which was not quite
 5 per cent of the total vote cast on the ques-
 tion. The Legislature, in February of this
 year, passed a comprehensive law to carry the
 prohibition into effect, prescribing stringent
 regulations to prevent all selling except for the
 three allowed purposes, and imposing heavy
 penalties for transgression. The fine for a first
 offence of selling without taking out the per-
 mit and giving the bond required by the law is
 from \$100 to \$500, and the imprisonment
 from thirty to ninety days; and these punish-
 ments are increased for repetitions of the
 offence. Suits were brought to test the
 law; even the validity of the amendment itself
 was questioned. And one or two of the lower
 courts favored some of the objections. The
 Supreme Court of the State thought differ-
 ently. One objection urged was that the
 amendment was not correctly carried through
 the Legislature. A constitutional amendment
 must be approved by a two-thirds vote of all
 the members elected to each House before it can
 be submitted to the people. The vote in the
 Kansas Legislature was very close; indeed,
 there is a tradition that before the result was
 announced ladies in the gallery who had kept a
 tally saw that one more "Yea" was necessary
 to secure approval, whereupon one of them
 whose husband, a dweller, had voted "No,"
 hurried down, succeeded in gaining speech with
 him, and pleaded with him to change his vote,
 which at length he did; whereby the amend-
 ment was carried. However this may have
 been, the opponents of the law complained of
 sundry irregularities and defects in maturing
 the amendment before the Legislature and in
 receiving and canvassing the votes of the peo-
 ple. But the judges brushed these complaints
 aside with the stout-hearted declaration that
 the single inquiry under a constitutional amend-
 ment is whether it has received the sanction of
 popular approval. "The substance of right is
 'grander and more potent than methods and
 forms. The important, vital elements are the
 'assent of two-thirds of the Legislature, and a
 'majority of the popular vote. Other provisions
 are merely machinery and form." Another ob-
 jection was that prohibition conflicts with the
 famous Fourteenth Amendment, for the latter
 forbids a State to impair the right of property,
 while the right to sell liquor is the very kernel,
 so to speak, of an owner's property in it. The
 Kansas Court said that the Supreme Court

Judges at Washington have pronounced prob-
 ition constitutional; and they ought to know.
 Again, fault was found with the law as involv-
 ing "class legislation"; it confines the business
 of selling for medical, scientific and mechanical
 purposes to druggists, and thus debars ordi-
 nary citizens from making profits so much
 of the business as the amendment leaves law-
 ful. The Court saw no harm in this, consider-
 ing that any citizen of good character who will
 give the bond and pay the fee can obtain a
 druggist's license. One or two of these test
 suits sought to convict apothecaries for selling
 cologne, bay-rum and like articles. Were
 these brought to render the law ridiculous? The
 judges decided, gravely, that the "intoxicating
 liquors" forbidden to be sold were such liquors
 as are adapted to be used as beverages; toilet
 articles are not forbidden, even though they
 may contain alcohol as an element.

Thus the law has been cordially sustained by
 the Courts. The Rev. Dr. McVicar, of Washburn
 College, writing to *The Congregationalist*, states
 that although in some of the larger cities it is
 not yet successfully enforced, it is willingly
 obeyed in the rural communities, and faithfully
 executed in the villages and towns. And he is
 confident that the prohibitory policy was long
 discussed throughout the State and deliberately
 adopted; that it has the support of strong pub-
 lic sentiment, and that it is destined to have a
 full and fair trial, despite temporary resistance
 in a few large cities. This resistance Governor
 St. John seems determined to overcome.

A WOMAN'S WORK.

The Reverend Ed. Cowley, of the Shepherd's
 Fold, has, it appears, his initiators in England.
 St. Paul's Industrial School was a charitable in-
 stitution for boys, under the supervision of the
 London School Board, who yearly sent a cer-
 tain number of pupils to it. A few months
 ago two of the pupils tried to burn the place
 down. They were arrested and tried, and the
 London papers were filled with moral reflec-
 tions upon the fiendish ingratitude which could
 break out in attempted arson and murder at an
 age when most children are hanging to their
 mother's knee. Fortunately, there was a
 shrewd, sensible business woman in the Board,
 who did not believe these babies had gone
 about such devilish work without a cause. She
 unearthed the whole management of the
 school, past and present; the children had been
 kept on starvation diet, had been half frozen,
 gone in rags, and were kept from open rebel-
 lion by a system of brutal abuse. The facts
 were so horrible that the Home Secretary has
 withdrawn the certificate from the school and
 closed it, addressing an open letter of thanks
 to Mrs. Surr for the great public service she
 has rendered.

The point of peculiar interest in this matter
 is that Mrs. Surr was fought back step by step
 throughout her investigation, not only by the
 managers of this school, but by the Board, who
 were anxious to cover up the facts from the
 public, to compromise with the authorities on
 their promise of amendment, to stifle inquiry
 at all hazards. They acted precisely as organ-
 ized associations almost invariably do when
 discredit is thrown upon the humanity or
 efficiency of their agents, in whom they put a
 blind trust. Their maxim is apparently that it
 is better a few helpless insane or infant paupers
 should be maltreated than that the faith of the
 public should be shaken in their system. It is
 a singular fact that every investigation into
 the mismanagement of charitable institutions
 which has been made in this country for five
 years, such as those which disclosed the brutal
 outrages or neglect in the Philadelphia Alms-
 house, the Morganza Home, and the Catholic
 Orphanage in the same State, has been made
 against the violent opposition of the trustees—
 the very men pledged to watch over them in the
 interests of humanity. There is to be an in-
 vestigation into the condition of all industrial
 schools in England, in which Mrs. Surr is to
 take an active part.

PREPARATION FOR CHRISTMAS.

This Sunday morning brings more than the
 usual sense of relief, as it shuts the shops and
 gives a momentary breathing-spell to the rush-
 ing crowd spending and making money in pre-
 paration for Christmas. Never was the outlay,
 or the temptations to outlay, so great as now.
 There are one or two features in the display
 of our retail houses which give significant hints
 of radical changes in our social system during
 the last five years. One is the enormous num-
 ber of articles offered for sale which are not
 imported or manufactured wholesale, but are
 the handiwork of women working, for the
 most part, in their own homes. Pictures of
 every degree of merit and atrocity, embroidery
 illustrating high and low art, china decorated
 in every conceivable fashion, books of novels,
 poems from the Princess Beatrix's regal volume
 to the little hand-colored shilling primer, statuettes,
 plaques, cards—everything that a woman's hands can fabricate
 which will command or miss a sale. The first
 fact proved by this exhibition is that the
 universal prejudice existing among Americans
 (outside of New-England) fifteen years
 ago, in the upper classes, against a woman's
 earning money, except for charitable purposes,
 must have totally disappeared. Most of these
 articles betray a positive amount of culture
 and refinement in the makers. They are un-
 mistakably the work of women who hold the
 factitious rank of "lady," and are evidently
 not ashamed to woo the "dirty dollar" into
 their fair palms.

The second point which strikes an observer
 in this varied and large display is its general
 mediocrity. The dealers are quite conscious of
 this, and put the prices accordingly low. For
 one trifling bit of china which is made by
 the painted leaf or figure on it worth \$15 or
 \$50, hundreds are sold for \$1 or \$2. Yet
 when one remembers the anxious faces and
 throbbing hearts which have bent over these
 poor cups and plates for hours and days,
 and that as much labor and time were given to
 the failure as to the successful venture, the
 little drama become parts of a pathetic human
 drama. It is the more pathetic because the
 failure is deserved. Women have taken up the
 pursuit of art since the Exposition of 1876,
 precisely as they took up sewing or dairy work
 before that time. For one who conscientiously
 strives for perfection in her work ten thousand
 go at it pell-mell, as a makeshift, to put a
 few dollars into their pockets until something
 better turns up. Some of them try painting
 and embroidery and sculpture at once, dash-
 ing off a poem or tale to fill up their leisure
 moments. When their embroidery or panel sells
 for a trifle, or does not sell at all, they talk of
 "rings" among publishers or artists, and fight
 them and Fate in bitterness of soul and to no
 earthly purpose. This is the dark side of the
 cheap art question. As for the demoralizing
 effect upon the public taste of cheap
 Christmas cards and chromos, it need
 not trouble any one greatly. The man who
 buys the chromo with his pound
 of tea, or listens enraptured to the hand-organ,
 has the eye and ear capable of so much enjoy-
 ment and no more. High Art would not help
 him much. Our artists forget that Nature
 teaches form and color to those who can learn
 better than their burn or bits of canvas can do.

There is a great deal of unnecessary uneasiness
 on this score lately. The thousands of eager
 men and women who will buy with delight
 this week these crude little pictures and
 sixth-rate cards, with their message of good will
 and kindness, will take them into homes made
 beautiful by affection and religious faith and
 often sublime by long, patient lives of self-
 sacrifice, although no one within them ever
 heard of Fortuny or Meissonier. Art has its
 place after all.

Another cause in the splendor of this
 Christmas display for groans and forebodings
 of disaster among many good people is the
 lavish outlay, especially by the class who pos-
 sess large wealth. They augur the worst re-
 sults to the Nation when they read of the thou-
 sands spent on the floral decorations for a single
 reception, or the cost of the trousseau for a bride.
 They are obstinately blind to the army of
 men and women employed, fed and clothed
 by the growth of these fast-fading roses, or
 the delicacies on the rich man's table. The
 American grown suddenly rich lets his money
 fly on every side in a golden shower; involun-
 tarily he blesses his poorer neighbors. The
 European buys lands, or invests it in securities
 wherewith to enrich the family he means to
 found. Don't let us grumble at the extravagance
 of this Christmas time, which, like
 opened sluice-gates, lets the stream of money
 descend to lower levels. If it should end in
 the bankruptcy of the spendthrift, that too
 has its most wholesome uses, both to himself
 and to society.

MYSTERIOUS FIRES.

Now that so much damage is done by great
 conflagrations, will it not be wise for the gen-
 eral public to bestow some attention upon the
 causes of fires and the precautions by which
 they may be avoided. It has been common in
 past years to say, when no one actually knew
 the origin, "Oh, an incendiary, of course." But
 arson is not so common as negligent house-
 holders, store-keepers and factory hands would
 have people believe. There are many natural
 though occult causes against which the com-
 mon people should be on guard. There is much
 accidental arson. A narrative not long ago
 given by *The Springfield (Ill.) Register* is to the
 effect that one night, as Mr. Frank Harbauer
 was seated upon the back step of his residence,
 he beheld a "ball of fire," which "resembled an
 electric light" and "descended with the rush-
 ing sound of a skyrocket," fell from the sky
 to the ground. No explosion was heard when
 it struck, nor did it leave any discoverable
 slag or meteoric stone. But it set the dry grass
 afire, and if Mr. Harbauer had not been at hand
 to rouse the neighbors for extinguishing the
 incipient blaze, a conflagration would have re-
 sulted, and it would of course have been quite
 inexplicable. As the only proof proffered of
 this story is that a burned spot in the grass was
 shown to the reporter next day, we feel at lib-
 erty to doubt whether the country is exposed to
 any widespread peril of fires set by natural
 lucifer matches rushing madly and at random
 through the atmosphere. But it is undeniable
 that the progress in practical science, the
 novelties in heating, lighting and chemical ap-
 paratus, and the increasing magnitude and
 haste of manufacturing operations, do give rise
 to new causes of fire faster than people are
 learning to be wary of them.

The electric light is developing as a cause of
 fires. Sparks may fall from an arc light, and
 if they strike combustible matter—rags, cotton-
 wool or the like—there is a blaze, and the build-
 ing is burned; such, according to some ex-
 planations given of the terrible burning of the
 Ring Theatre, Vienna, and the fatal disaster at
 Landenberg's Mill, in Pennsylvania, was the
 origin of those calamities. If a slender wire
 or bit of metal forms by accident a connection—
 "short circuit" electricians call it—between two
 of the wires which feed an electric light, it is
 liable, under certain circumstances, to be heated
 red hot, and may then set fire to con-
 tiguous woodwork. Perfect insulation of the
 wires will prevent this, but care enough is not
 always taken to maintain the coating in perfect
 condition. The Germania Theatre is said to
 have narrowly escaped a fire from this cause
 recently. The question is now under official
 discussion what regulations for using the light
 shall be prescribed to prevent these accidents;
 and it behooves proprietors who are introducing
 it to give employees and workmen proper in-
 structions.

"Spontaneous combustion" is a vague ex-
 planation or excuse for results of ignorance or
 carelessness of workmen employed in manufac-
 tures involving novel chemical combinations or
 apparatus. Men, my girls and apprentice boys,
 are set without warning to mix things which
 cannot be mingled without peril, and are al-
 lowed without reproof to leave articles heaped
 together which may under accidental friction
 or slight rise of temperature kindle each other;
 and when a fire ensues it is charged to sponta-
 neous combustion. Mismanagement of new-
 fashioned lamps and heaters, entrusted to persons
 only half taught how to use them, is a fertile
 cause. Upon one version of the Vienna case,
 a workman's negligent use of an alcohol
 lamp brought it about.

What shall we say of a person so reckless as to
 pack dangerous combustibles in a traveller's
 baggage or to send them by mail? Post-office
 clerks in Hartford lately detected a parcel on
 its way to an insurance policy, in which was
 a block of white pine wood, sawed and cross-
 sawed, making numerous crevices which were
 filled with resin, and bearing a friction match
 so mounted that any accidental rubbing would
 ignite it. Of course a malicious attempt to
 burn the mail was suspected; but a letter soon
 after arriving for the insurance president dis-
 closed that the sender forwarded the device as
 a sample of a means used in his part of the
 country to start a fire without leaving a clue to
 its origin. Had the mail bag and contents been
 burned, there would have been a most mysteri-
 ous fire; and there is no knowing what damage
 and loss of life might not be caused by a
 fire thus started in a mail car and fanned to
 fierceness by the rush of the train.

RELIGIOUS INSANITY.

Whether Guiteau's vagaries are real or simu-
 lated is one question; whether, if real, they
 call for sending him to the asylum instead of
 the gallows, is another. There is a strange
 uncertainty of opinion on the latter point;
 whether the law of the land can safely excuse
 a self-supposed Abraham from punishment for
 killing his Isaac—which, by the way, the
 real Abraham in the account did not
 do. The original Abraham heard a cautionary
 voice just in time, and killed a ram instead of
 his son. Hence the inquiry recurs, shall not
 whoever sets up the example of Abraham in sup-
 port of an imaginary inspiration toward homicide
 be required to show that he followed the
 Scripture narrative consistently throughout,
 changed the course of his weapon, allowed his
 first selected human victim to go unhurt, and
 slaughtered some unfortunate brute instead?
 Had Guiteau, when standing in the depot,
 heard a second heavenly voice, and had he
 obediently thereto merely shot a dog across
 the street, we should make no objection to an
 acquittal on the ground of insanity.

The whole subject of religious insanity has

had little instructive, authoritative discussion.
 We recall two works professing to make
 it their chief topic: Bingham's *Observations on*
the Religious Delusions of Insane Persons,
 London, 1841, and Chayne's *Essays on Partial*
Derangement in Supposed Connection with
Religion, Dublin, 1843. Both were written in
 the very infancy of modern knowledge
 of mental disease. Chayne even puts
 forward the theorem that mental derangements
 are always connected with mental disease, as a
 new position! Both volumes are small and
 diffuse, largely filled with matters which a
 reader at the present day would skip as ele-
 mentary or disregard as behind the times.
 They throw no light on the question of re-
 sponsibility. But there are, scattered through
 the general works on insanity, instances of
 these religious delusions abundantly sufficient
 to show that brain disease sometimes produces
 them, and that they may urge the subject on-
 ward to perpetrate almost any act of
 violence. Hackett, in Queen Elizabeth's
 time, and Vener, in the reign
 of Charles II., raised editions, each acting
 under the delusion that he was divinely com-
 missioned to assume the crown. The poet
 Cowper wounded himself somewhat severely
 with a pen-knife in attempting to obey a sup-
 posed command from Heaven that he should
 kill himself. An Englishman, without ap-
 parent motive, struck a cab horse in the street
 with an axe; on his trial it was found that he
 believed himself to be Jesus Christ and did the
 act in the desire to attract attention to his
 supposed mission. An Englishwoman drowned
 four of her children, acting under the sugges-
 tion of a "black shadow figure," that if they
 were in Heaven they would be out of danger,
 and that she could easily put them into the
 cistern and thus secure their eternal safety.
 Martin, the incendiary, who set fire to York
 Cathedral, admitted that he knew the act to
 be illegal, but said that he had the command
 of God to do it. This case is remarkable for
 the indications of sane methods accompanying
 an insane act. There was no doubt of his in-
 sanity; he had been already twice confined in
 an asylum. But it was shown that after
 afternoon service he remained in the church
 and, as soon as alone, went up into the belfry,
 where he cut off some eighty feet of the
 prayer-bell rope, in which he tied knots, form-
 ing a sort of ladder by which he climbed over
 the iron gates of the choir. Having thus
 gained access to the choir he struck a light
 with a flint and his razor, lighted a candle
 which he had brought, and thus set fire to
 paper obtained by tearing up prayer-books,
 and which he piled close to the carved work
 at the archbishop's throne. He then made his
 escape by equally ingenious and methodical
 efforts. A young Irishman dug out his
 eye and cut off his hand, imagining he
 was obeying the command: "If thy right eye
 offend thee, etc." In France, years ago, a
 whole family, Dutartres by name, fancied that
 they alone possessed knowledge of the true
 God, and under imaginary inspiration perpe-
 trated murders and other crimes. A French
 vine-dresser thought himself commissioned
 to procure the eternal salvation of his family
 by killing them, and did kill two of his chil-
 dren. For this he was put in perpetual con-
 finement as a lunatic; where, years after-
 ward, he conceived the project of offering
 an expiatory sacrifice, in pursuance of which
 idea he cut the throats of two fellow-lunatics
 and wounded his keeper. A commissioner
 was once sent to the Bicetre to set at liberty
 patients whom he should judge to have recovered from their
 lunacy, and he selected one whose answers to
 numerous questions gave no indication of
 madness. He made a written order for the
 man's release; but on submitting this, in due
 course, to the patient for his signature, the
 latter betrayed his delusion by subscribing his
 name "Christ." Benvenuto Cellini, while in
 prison, was impressed by hallucinations of the
 bodily appearance of Jesus, of which he gave
 a long, graphic description. Lovat, in Venice,
 in imitation of the crucifixion, contrived
 to nail himself to a cross, and then to
 sling it out at the window of his lodging
 room in full view of the horrified church-
 goers. American examples are not so nume-
 rous, but the case of the father in Massa-
 chusetts a year or two ago, who slaughtered
 his daughter in imitation of the sacrifice of
 Isaac, will be well remembered.

Medical opinions differ from legal as to
 whether delusions like these should exempt
 the subject from criminal punishment. The
 general view taken by Anglo-American jurists
 is that it is not safe or practicable to
 accept the delusion as an excuse, unless it
 shows the man to have been incapable from
 disease of comprehending that his act was
 punishable; or, at least, that it was morally
 wrong. In other words, if Guiteau's brain
 was so affected that he could not, by any
 effort he was able to make, have realized that
 his shooting Garfield was "criminal"—or, as
 some say "wrong"—he is exempt; otherwise
 not; and his delusion, if one existed, must
 have been according to legal opinion such that,
 if it were true, his act would have been unpun-
 ishable. The general opinion of medical writ-
 ers is to the effect that this standard is too
 strict. It assumes, they say, that men